

APPROVED: Meeting No. 24-92

ATTEST: 

MAYOR AND COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND
Meeting No. 22-92

May 26, 1992

The Mayor and Council of Rockville, Maryland, convened in Worksession in the Council Chamber, Rockville City Hall, 111 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, Maryland, on May 26, 1992, at 6:30 p.m.

PRESENT

Mayor Douglas M. Duncan

Councilmember James T. Marrinan

Councilmember Rose G. Krasnow (arr. at 6:40 p.m.)

Councilmember James F. Coyle (arr. at 7:08 p.m.)

Councilmember David Robbins (arr. at 7:20 p.m.)

In attendance: City Manager Bruce Romer, City Clerk Sharon Gran and City Attorney Paul Glasgow.

Re: Worksession with Planning
Commission

Commission members Gloria Atlas, Charles Haughey, Yolande Langbehn, David Melnick and James Vitol discussed the following Town Center issues with the Mayor and Council:

Densities

The current Town Center Plan permits densities ranging from 2.0 FAR up to 6.0 FAR in the Town Center zoning classifications. These density limits can be reached only through maximum

Meeting No. 22-92

2

May 26, 1992

use of the schedule of bonus items.

Mayor Duncan requested that the Commission work with staff to see what densities would be feasible. There needs to be a more realistic or reasonable density as the Town Center could not handle the traffic that would be generated by the greater densities.

Mr. Vitol suggested following the same approach as used along Rockville Pike--a restrictive base zone requiring that the test for standard traffic methodology be met.

Mrs. Atlas indicated that although there are diverse opinions on the Commission regarding Town Center, there is agreement that there are too many zones. Just two zones would be sufficient, with higher density specified for Town Center and lower density as you approach the residential areas.

Mayor Duncan feels that the goal is not to be too restrictive and that it makes more sense to do something similar to the retail along Rockville Pike. Questions were raised as to what is an acceptable level of traffic in the downtown area and whether additional traffic should be permitted to secure some other amenity or a particular use.

Discussion followed as to a "vision" of downtown. Mayor Duncan would like to see a center of activity, both day and night, with offices, retail and residential, not something that empties out at 5:00. Bethesda was mentioned as an example of street activity, night and weekends.

Councilmember Marrinan indicated that he likes the Victoria project and its mixed use concept.

Linear Park

Mrs. Atlas commented that this concept was negated by the development of the Victoria. Mayor Duncan responded that the concept has not been negated, but was simply moved to the Phase

Meeting No. 22-92

3

May 26, 1992

III development of the Metro Center. Concern was expressed that if large buildings were constructed on the Middle Lane site, the linear park would be lost.

The concept of pedestrian access is very valid, and Mr. Vitol indicated the need for some type of connecting bridge across Middle Lane. He also expressed concern as to whether the City has the right to require the linear park of the future builder of Phase III.

The City Attorney advised that the linear park is still a requirement for development of Phase III, and he would review this issue to ensure that it is still a viable concept. As to whether the City has a right to an easement for linkage over Middle Lane, the City Attorney responded in the affirmative. Mr. Vitol, however, expressed concern that the City may not have the right to require the linkage on the Victoria side.

Councilmember Krasnow would like to see a new plan or vision for the Town Center and expressed concern that things have been done piecemeal. She agrees with the Planning Commission that we need an idea of where we are going.

Mayor Duncan suggested gearing a plan to attract the desired uses. A change in the liquor law would allow urban areas to get a third franchise restaurant which could not locate elsewhere in the County.

Without a major shopping center as a drawing card, discussion followed as to how to attract people to the town center area. Mr. Melnick indicated that if higher densities inflate property costs, perhaps by lowering the cost of the land we would attract more realistic development proposals. Consideration must be given to the market and the state of the economy.

Discussion followed regarding flexibility with respect to land uses, and Mayor Duncan advised the Commission that concessions could be made with respect to purchase of City owned land

Meeting No. 22-92

4

May 26, 1992

dependent upon the user or the requirements placed on a builder in Town Center.

Heights

The current plan allows heights of up to 300 feet, but only with all available bonuses. It was generally agreed that this is an imposing height; however, lower buildings equate to additional use of land which would result in less available green space.

Middle Lane

The Commission is considering a different type of use for this parcel as an alternative public area. Councilmember Krasnow noted that a park is certainly preferable to an asphalt parking lot; however, this land is too valuable for such a use.

Courthouse Square does function effectively for 99% of the City's special events. Should the Middle Lane site be developed, City staff is prepared to move Hometown Holidays. The future of Middle Lane should be based on economics rather than community events.

Councilmember Coyle expressed concern with the fact that if we are fortunate enough to get a linear park, it may be fairly small. We should rethink how much open space is needed in that area. The concept of a pedestrian promenade is good; however, it needs to be larger.

Mrs. Atlas noted the need to preserve our retail space downtown. Mr. Vitol indicated that the future of retail is questionable in the long-term as economics are not favorable in the long run.

Mayor Duncan indicated that there is support for some type of green space concept.

Mr. Vitol noted that the Commission will decide what they would like to see in Town Center, and staff can provide direction.

Councilmember Coyle envisions mixed use but not as dense as the Arthur Cotton Moore plan. An activity center of some type, not a total office environment, is preferable. Councilmember

Meeting No. 22-92

5

May 26, 1992

Krasnow suggested more development along North Washington Street with retail areas designed to serve local residents who can walk rather than drive.

Councilmember Robbins noted the importance of keeping Town Center pedestrian-oriented.

(The City Attorney left the meeting at this time.)

Re: Review of Capital
Improvements Program

Mr. Romer stated that this joint session fulfills the requirement that the Planning Commission have a role in the review of the Capital Improvements Program. A number of goals have been accomplished this year in terms of making the CIP a realistic economic document.

Rick Kuckkahn, Assistant City Manager, provided the following summary of the process:

- o A number of new, revised projects have been added to this year's CIP through the three recent addendum. Staff is now able to adjust to the community's requests and communicate the impacts to the Mayor and Council immediately.

- o Citizens continue to support key elements in the program and are very willing to offer their opinions which is important in developing priorities. Thus, we have a CIP that is responsive to community preferences and tied to guaranteeing a sound future infrastructure.

- o The CIP has been developed consistent with the capital financing and debt management policies set by the Mayor and Council in May of 1989.

- o This year's program takes every possible advantage of a highly competitive bid market. In previous years, project costs were escalating at a rate which was affecting the timing of future projects. Staff will follow this condition closely; with the de-escalating impact of inflation, some

Meeting No. 22-92

6

May 26, 1992

projects may be accelerated.

- o Wootton Parkway, one of our largest projects, is nearly complete. The significant impact of this single project on the program will ease in the coming years.

- o A neighborhood orientation of the CIP has been developed to facilitate each citizen's attempt to personalize the budget and gain an understanding of the specific benefits to be anticipated in his or her own neighborhood.

Councilmember Coyle noted major improvements in the CIP process. He feels that it should be viewed more as a financial plan than a planning document.

Questions were raised regarding the neighborhood orientation of the CIP, and the City Manager advised that it was merely intended as a focus but staff will reexamine its format.

FY98 is the queuing year, and it was noted that, in order to get projects into the CIP, a number were added in FY98. It might be necessary to prioritize and bring projects forward as the economy improves. Priorities in FY98 depend upon the wishes of the Mayor and Council and the community. There is flexibility to filter programs in as needed.

Infrastructure maintenance and improvement is a priority and, when additional money is available, other projects will be considered.

Councilmember Coyle questioned coordinating the economic development plan and master plan with the CIP, and was advised that this will be done when the economic development plan and master plan are completed.

Art in Public Places

In accordance with the recommendations of the Cultural Arts Commission, there is no funding for this project in FY93.

Meeting No. 22-92

7

May 26, 1992

Civic Center Mansion Improvements

With respect to compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Councilmember Krasnow was advised that there are several levels on the first floor on which ramping is somewhat difficult. Although a claim could be made that this facility is exempt from the provisions of ADA because it is an historic building, the decision as to whether to install an elevator has not yet been finalized.

The sprinkler system is being expanded to the second floor west wing because there is no exit, and Councilmember Coyle was advised that all required portions of the mansion are sprinklered.

F. Scott Fitzgerald Theatre & Social Hall

This project sheet has been updated to reflect changes in the funding schedule for electrical service and pneumatic controls.

Lincoln Park Neighborhood Enhancements

Mayor Duncan requested that staff estimate how much it would cost to renovate the Lincoln Park ballfield to the level of league play.

As to whether any decisions have been made by the committee for enhancements, Mr. Kuckkahn responded that lighting and landscaping will be done next year.

Mr. Vitol questioned the location of this project under the Recreation and Leisure Time Services portion of the CIP with proposed projects such as curbs and gutters. There was discussion regarding the possibility of assigning this a geographic designation such as the projects in Town Center.

Platform Tennis Courts

Meeting No. 22-92

8

May 26, 1992

Councilmember Marrinan was advised that there has been little community demand or input regarding this project.

Recreation Centers - Kitchen Improvements

Councilmember Krasnow was advised that the kitchens are used for cooking classes, snacks for the after school programs, etc.

Senior Center Roof Replacement

Councilmember Krasnow was advised that the existing roof was being removed and that one-half of the installation of the new roof has been completed.

Baltimore Road Sidewalk/Street Lighting

This project was recently added to coincide with the Wire Hardware restoration. Ms. Langbehn noted that she would rather see this as an out-year project and the City move forward the elevator/stairway at Hungerford Drive. The latter project is more critical to the safety of pedestrians and movement of traffic along Route 355.

Staff was requested to research the relationship between the viability of Peerless Rockville's efforts to restore Wire Hardware and the approval of this project. Councilmember Krasnow noted the importance of showing support of Peerless' project and the process they are undertaking while remaining sensitive to other important projects.

Beall Avenue Sidewalk-Van Buren 670' East

Mrs. Atlas questioned the funding source of General Obligation bonds and the fact that this may set up an expectation that is incorrect. The funding note included in the description of the project, "Appropriate costs will be assessed against the adjacent properties subject to limitation of benefits" should be highlighted.

Meeting No. 22-92

9

May 26, 1992

Concrete Maintenance Program

Councilmember Krasnow noted that additional miles of road repair were included in FY92 as a result of favorable bids and asked if this would continue next year. Mr. Kuckkahn responded that a decision will be made in the near future.

With respect to the smoothseal program, Mrs. Atlas asked if there is a posting program to notify residents and was advised that such a program is in place. In addition to the posting, letters will also be sent to affected residents.

Elevator/Stairway-Hungerford Drive Bridge

Mayor Duncan requested that this item be placed on the "wish list" to move up, and staff indicated that funding modifications would be reviewed.

Driveway Apron Program

Councilmember Krasnow was advised that each year of this program is treated as a separate project; thus, there is no prior years' total. However, this information is provided in the Previously Approved Projects section of the CIP.

Grandin Avenue Sidewalk-First Street 600' East

The construction of this project would eliminate a discontinuity in the area's sidewalk network. Mayor Duncan requested that it be added to the wish list to move up. City funding is appropriate where safety is a factor, but Mrs. Atlas noted an equity issue in assessing adjacent property owners for the costs of this project.

Highland Avenue - Grandin Avenue 200' East

Mr. Vitol questioned why this project is being done for one property owner and was advised that the City has a general policy of resurfacing substandard roadways.

Meeting No. 22-92

10

May 26, 1992

Maryland Avenue Sidewalk-S. Washington to Falls

It was noted that the City would be as flexible as possible in the construction of this sidewalk in order to provide a safe, comfortable walk for people to use and one which satisfies the adjoining property owners.

North Street - Van Buren 400' East

Mayor Duncan noted that this project has been moved back several times and requested that it be put on the wish list to be moved up.

Seven Locks Road Dead End

Ms. Langbehn asked if it were possible to get funding from the County since this project would be beneficial to their operations. It was agreed that a temporary dead end would be installed and the project placed on the wish list.

Sidewalk Links

Mrs. Atlas referenced a disconnect on Stratton Drive leading to Potomac Woods Park and asked that it be added to the project.

Tower Oaks SWM Facilities

This project description was amended to change the word "facility" to "facilities."

Woottons Mill Park SWM Facility

Several acres of wetlands have been identified as possible mitigation sites in this streambed. Mayor Duncan stated that he would like to see some money put into wetlands and renovation of the streambed. These are excellent projects for developer contributions.

Arterial Street Lighting

A schedule will be provided identifying in which years the various streets are targeted

Meeting No. 22-92

11

May 26, 1992

for this lighting. It was discussed that priorities can be adjusted.

Councilmember Coyle referenced the recently installed traffic circle at Watts Branch and asked if there is a procedure for receiving input from the Department of Fire/Rescue Services as to adequate accessibility. Mr. Romer indicated that the design had been tested by Fire/Rescue and was adequate to meet their needs.

Upon motion of Commission member Vitol, duly seconded and unanimously passed by a vote of all Commission members present, the Planning Commission recommended to the Mayor and Council approval of the FY93-98 Capital Improvements Program for the City of Rockville with the changes and/or modifications herein discussed.

(This concluded the joint worksession with the Mayor and Council and Planning Commission.)

Re: Worksession - FY93
Operating Budget

Public Works Department

Bob Goodin, Director of Public Works, noted that his department had met the guideline of a five percent reduction in operating expenditures. The same service level will be continued in FY93; there will be no new programs or personnel.

A minor reallocation of personnel in the Stormwater Management Design/Inspection Division will cover general emergencies in the stormwater management area, and an increase in operating costs is related to maintenance of the facilities.

In response to Councilmember Coyle, staff advised that the Stormwater Management Task Force is looking into funding levels for streambed maintenance.

Meeting No. 22-92

12

May 26, 1992

Councilmember Krasnow was advised that the City is responsible for inspection of on-site stormwater management facilities.

Special emphasis has been added to the Traffic Engineering Division's budget to continue the roadway spot improvements program consistent with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Councilmember Marrinan was advised that staff has addressed concerns regarding the work performed this fiscal year by the contractor for the smoothseal program. The specifications have been reviewed and amended.

As a result of implementation of the new fleet replacement guidelines, substantial savings have been realized.

Refuse Division:

There has been a decrease in the total amount of refuse going to the landfill for disposal.

Councilmember Krasnow commented that there is still a question of which heavy items do not require special pick-ups.

Councilmember Coyle noted that people are missing their recycling days and bags are sitting out for a long period of time.

Staff responded that the refuse and recycling processes continue to improve each week.

As to recycling of phone books and cardboard, Mayor Duncan was advised that staff is waiting to see if the County will market the recyclables. Mayor Duncan commented that Takoma Park is recycling these materials, and staff will follow up with Takoma Park staff.

Councilmember Marrinan observed that residents do not appear to be aware that trash pick-ups still take place on holidays.

Meeting No. 22-92

13

May 26, 1992

Water System Maintenance Division:

The increase in capital outlay expenditures is for the purchase of required safety equipment.

Councilmember Krasnow asked if the discolored water problem would continue. Mr. Goodin responded that a major effort is underway to flush out the systems and, by the end of the first week in July, there should be a noticeable difference.

Sanitary Sewer System Maintenance Division:

This division's increase in capital outlay expenditures is also attributable to a major increase in safety materials.

Sewage Disposal Division:

Mr. Goodin reported that the latest information from WSSC is that operating costs at the Blue Plains Treatment Plant are increasing significantly. The impact to the City is \$182,000 or an increase of \$.11 on the sewer tax rate.

Recreation and Parks Department

The Mayor and Council expressed appreciation to Burt Hall, Director, and staff for the wonderful Hometown Holidays Celebration held this past weekend.

Mr. Hall reported that the Department plans to maintain service levels and allow for continued maintenance of buildings and public rights-of-way. All divisions met the 5% decrease in operating costs guideline and, overall, the department's budget has increased only .14% over FY92.

Proposed fee increases will result in higher revenues, and these fee increases have been reviewed and approved by the various boards and commissions and advisory committees.

Some implications of this proposed budget are:

Meeting No. 22-92

14

May 26, 1992

- o Combination of Rockville Day and the Antique and Classic Car Show into one event.
- o Reduction in new trees and shrubs except in the rights-of-way.
- o Decrease in the Senior Taxi Program.
- o Replacement of Free Swim with a Community Swim and a fee of \$1 for participation.
- o Initiation of new fees in the summer playground program which should generate \$15,000 in revenue.

Councilmember Krasnow was advised that the summer playground is extended for two weeks in August at five of the locations.

- o Continuation of plan to create a differential in resident versus non-resident fees and charging fees for after-school programs.
- o Elimination of three T.G.I.F. concerts.
- o Reduction in contract funds for the City's Arts Consultant.
- o Significant enhancements in the outdoor family programs.
- o Coordination with County for the under 21 program.
- o Elimination of the Boys' Holiday Basketball Tournament.
- o Continuation of a close working relationship with RBBA and RFL and administration of three-tiered fee structure.
- o Cooperating with County and Gaithersburg to ensure a viable number of players on teams.
- o Continued growth in the Hispanic speaking senior program

The County is proposing to eliminate all-day kindergarten, and the department has been asked to reinstate the K.A.T. program at Ritchie Park if this decision is made. Beall Elementary has

Meeting No. 22-92

15

May 26, 1992

six kindergarten classes, and additional programs may be required at this school as well.

There continues to be a strong service demand for senior programs, and the Senior Center membership is over 2,000 and growing. Evening uses at the Senior Center will be consolidated so that the Center is open three nights per week rather than five. This will not impact any of the programs.

Special Events:

The biggest change in special events is the consolidation of Rockville Day and the Antique and Classic Car Show. Discussion followed as to how to promote this combined event and by what name it would be called.

An aggressive Courthouse Square program will continue with lots of activities scheduled on weekdays.

The Recreation and Park Advisory Board will be submitting a recommendation to change the Easter Egg Hunt from Easter Sunday to the day before. Although there have been no complaints received regarding the Easter Sunday date, this change would be consistent with the practice in many other areas.

Councilmember Krasnow raised the issue of fireworks at the Rotary Twilight Runfest. Mr. Hall described the fundraising efforts of this event. Following discussion, it was agreed that this would be an item for discussion at Monday night's budget worksession.

With respect to Courthouse Square, with the elimination of three concerts, Mayor Duncan expressed concern that there would be no events for two months. It was noted that the Kiwanis Chili Cook-Off has been scheduled for September in Courthouse Square.

Mayor Duncan commented that there is an organization which holds special event

Meeting No. 22-92

16

May 26, 1992

seminars focusing on ways to get corporate sponsors. He asked if the department has looked into outside training to enhance our fundraising capabilities and learn from experiences in other cities.

Special Facilities:

Swim Center. The pool fees have already been approved. Membership fees have been raised by five percent and admission fees remain at the FY92 levels. The institution last year of a daily admission fee was a financial success and well-received.

A three-year program is underway to raise program fees to self-supporting levels at the Swim Center.

A special pass is available for eligible residents who cannot afford to pay the community swim fee.

Staff will continue to aggressively pursue corporate memberships.

Redgate Golf Course. Fees will cover the operating and capital budgets of the Redgate Golf Course. Non-resident fees have been raised slightly.

Hours are being expanded for starts in an attempt to speed up play.

The new clubhouse addition is underway this summer.

Mayor Duncan questioned the revenue projections over the next five years and was advised that more of the capital fund monies are being expended.

Civic Center. This budget reflects a 1.5% decrease. A substantial increase in non-resident fees is proposed which will amount to a 40% differential. Fees remain competitive, and there should be no decrease in use.

Both the mansion and social hall are being heavily promoted for weekday conferences and seminars.

Meeting No. 22-92

17

May 26, 1992

The Civic Center Committee has proposed \$61,300 in improvements to the first floor of the mansion.

Staff will work with theatre user groups and the Cultural Arts Commission to maximize weekend performance schedules at the Theatre.

With respect to the location of stormwater management maintenance in Recreation and Parks budget rather than Public Works, Councilmember Coyle was advised that it is primarily grass mowing. The City Manager responded that staff will look into this matter.

Re: Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m., to convene again in Worksession at 7:30 p.m. on June 1, 1992, or at the call of the Mayor.